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Henry Ford Medical Group

**Henry Ford Hospital
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Henry Ford Hospital
Henry Ford Behavioral Health Services
Maplegrove Center
Kingswood Hospital
Henry Ford Cottage Hospital
Henry Ford Medical Centers

Henry Ford Physician Network

Henry Ford Macomb Hospitals
Clinton Township Campus
Mt. Clemens Campus
Warren Campus
Henry Ford Macomb Health Centers

Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital

Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital
Center for Health Services

Health Alliance Plan
Alliance Health and Life
HAP Preferred
CuraNet

Community Care Services
Henry Ford at Home
Henry Ford Health Products
Hospices of Henry Ford
Henry Ford Extended Care
Henry Ford Home Health Care
Center for Senior Independence
Greenfield Health Systems
Henry Ford Continuing Care
Henry Ford OptiMiles
Henry Ford Pharmacy
Occupational Health

Centers of Excellence
Heart & Vascular Institute
Josephine Ford Cancer Center
Neuroscience Institute
Transplant Institute
Vattikuti Urology Institute

henryford.com

March 23, 2012

The Honorable Kenneth Kurtz
Chairman, House Families, Children and Seniors Committee
992 House Office Building
Lansing, Michigan 48909

RE: Autism Legislation

Senate Bills 414, 415, and 981 require insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. The Henry Ford Health System (HFHS) joins the Michigan Health and Hospital Association and the Michigan State Medical Society in support of requiring insurance coverage for autism.

Autism is one of the few chronic conditions currently not covered by insurance in Michigan. Twenty-nine other states have this coverage, with autism legislation pending in 10 other states.

Early diagnosis and intensive intervention leads to positive academic, functional, and vocational outcomes. Very few families have the financial resources to participate in these important therapies without insurance coverage. Passage of legislation to require insurance coverage will allow Michigan to assure greater access to families seeking treatment and help retain and attract qualified therapists to Michigan. The Henry Ford Center for Autism and Developmental Disorders provides diagnosis and treatment for autism, but our center is limited in the number of patients we can serve, due to the scarce number of competent, certified therapists -- most leave our state after graduation to pursue jobs in states which do provide reimbursement for their services through insurance coverage. Children who reside in less populous areas of Michigan currently have no nearby centers, although Henry Ford hopes to develop programming and make appropriate outreach efforts to begin serving these families as well.

The House has significantly improved the legislation by allowing insurers to create networks to allow for the highest quality of services to be available to families.

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In addition, there are cost containment provisions including staggered coverage amounts by age and an age 18 cap for eligibility for services and treatment. We support this version of the legislation requiring coverage for autism and would urge adoption.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

CEO Henry Ford Health System

cc: Honorable Members, Families, Children & Seniors Comm.
Honorable Rick Snyder, Governor
Honorable Brian Calley, Lt. Governor
David Meador

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